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THE
BELFAST MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

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COMMUNICATIONS, ORIGINAL AND SELECTED.

For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.

AN ESSAY ON ESSAY-WRITING.

THERE is a friend lives near me,
who has a gallery of pictures.
Among the many fair illusions of
the graphic art, none pleases me
better than a picture representing
two persons sitting in close conference,
Drawing and Designing.
The first with pencil and pallet in
hand, consulting or looking into the
countenance of the latter, watching
till the fair idea ripens into thought,
in the sublime countenance of her
sister. And certainly there is a
moment to be waited for, when the
young idea is ready for perfection ;
when the swelling froit

Quem mulcent auræ, firmat Sol, educat
imber

is filled with generous juice and
flavour, and is ready for the table
to rejoice the hearts of gods and men.
But my idea goes farther. Candidus,
I wish to consider with you how
the fair idea may be ripened in the
bud of being while conception is
clothing, and attiring it into character.
The same assistance that Designing
gives to Drawing, I plead
for, and derive from the countenance
of a sympathetic friend : and
if no friend is personally at hand,
you are always ready, and to your
charming and expressive countenance
I appeal. You, Candidus,
take the young essayist by the hand ;

BELFAST MAG. NO. LXX.

“ You rear the tender thought,
You teach the young idea how to shoot.”

Your ingenuous word of encouragement
fledges the young, the infant
sentiment. Like the breath of
whispering zephyr, you call the
tender and bashful virgin idea into
life.

“ Ye living buds, why do ye stay ?”

COWLEY.

When Deity went forth to create,
theology says that he multiplied
his person and said ; “ Let us make
man in our image.” When he
formed man in his own image, of
course he created him with parts
and talents capable of creating,
though in a smaller measure ; and
he gives him the same or similar
auxiliaries too. He has appointed
that the human soul and her faculties
shall unfold into development
by the aid of communication.
Such is the infinite multiplication
of idea that is formed by kindred
minds catching the light of Heaven,
which is rationality, and reflecting
it back and forward in infinite
play and process of communication.
Asperities are smoothed down ;
shade softens and sinks into shade,
and by the endless repetition of
refracted, and reflected light,
the whole is seen in one beautiful
perspective. What I wish to convey
in this essay is this ; that when
you essay any thing in writing,
it is of importance that you
address yourself to the mind or the

A 2 2

countenance of a friend pour l' en-
visager : it is of material aid in the
development of thought, even though
your friend utters not a word :
you explore your own sentiment in
the reflection of his countenance.
Does not the whole world bear wit-
ness to this advantage in the words
character, and reputation ? We
stand upon reputation as a basis on
which to build the fair pillar of
character, that thereon may be
traced new characters of fair impost,
worthy to be read and to perpetu-
ate our names to future times.

A.S.

For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.

EXAMINATION OF LINES OF ALEX-
ANDER POPE.

"For forms of government let fools con-
test,
Whate'er is best administer'd is best ;
For modes of faith let graceless zealots
fight,
His can't be wrong, whose life is in the
right."

AS these lines have a jingle, they
pass for truth. Now I am de-
sirous in company with you, Can-
didus, to examine them to the bot-
tom, to try if they be true, or
merely truisms, that is, having a
faint resemblance of truth. Beware
of professing friends that you have
not proved : put not too much con-
fidence in these, or they perhaps
may sting you to the heart. We
arm against declared enemies. This
reminds me of Dr. Johnson's father,
who used to lock the hall-door
every night, though the house was
open and exposed on the rere. The
sentiment of Pope seems to declare
against studying the science of
government, the Respolitica, as a
negatory thing. If men will not
study government to discover the
wisest system, by which all the

parts of the body politic, being
well regulated and poised, there
may be no jarring or dissonance in
the administration ; how shall they
know to form a constitution, or to
keep it in order by wise provisions
and checks when constituted ? How
shall they know at the different
periods of time, when opportunity
is afforded for adjustment, what is
out of order, and how to apply
the salutary remedy ? Is it not
by understanding any machine,
whether it be mathematical, as a
globe or an orrery ; or mechanical,
as a clock, a steam-engine, or a
mill, that we shall know how to re-
gulate its movements, and to keep
it in order ? Depend upon it, if
men who are to be governed, do
not study the science of govern-
ment for the purpose of introducing
these wise and salutary adjustments,
those who are to govern will study
how to subjugate them, to take ad-
vantage of their ignorance, follies,
and vices, to ride upon their necks.
I conclude therefore, that this sen-
timent of Pope is a most pernicious
one, and instead of those being reck-
oned fools who addict themselves to
the science of government, that
there is not in the compass of human
intellect, a more important topic to
occupy and exercise the human
mind than this very thing. The
business is not, says the wise pleader
in Sallust, speaking of the Catiline
conspiracy, to consider how or in
what manner we shall occupy or
enjoy the blessings of life, but
whether we shall live at all, or we,
our wives, and our children become
the prey of civil and military
rapine. It is owing to this, having
wise statesmen, men who appreciated
the value, and exercised the talent
of political wisdom, that the state
of England has risen pre-eminent
among the nations : these were men
who did not basely compromise or
give in exchange their civil free-